Beyond orientalism

Beyond Orientalism: The Case of Jenaro Pérez Villaamil

Claudia Hopkins

University of Edinburgh, UK

Abstract: Nineteenth-century Spanish imagery relating to Al-Andalus offers rich material for exploring Orientalism. Focusing on the landscape painter Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, this article reveals the special situation of Spanish artists as both object and subject of Orientalism: their culture is orientalized by foreigners, but Spanish artists are also capable of orientalising parts of their own culture and other cultures. Existing scholarship on Pérez Villaamil has focused on his assimilation of British art and his status as one of Spain's first 'Orientalist' painters. This essay widens the perspective by foregrounding Spanish *attitudes* to the Islamic past. Looking beyond the orthodox label of Orientalism, what were the motivations, codes and values by which Pérez Villaamil translated Spain's Islamic past into two-dimensional images and how might they have been understood at the time? It is argued that Pérez Villaamil's work reveals a desire to resist the foreign orientalising gaze, and instruct the viewer in the 'character' of the Spanish nation. His print albums, the *España Artística y Monumental* (which have never been analysed in depth) and his later paintings for Isabel II are discussed as meditations on Spain's history, not necessarily based on the concept of alterity.

KEYWORDS: Orientalism, Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, nineteenth-century Spanish art, Arabism, national identity, Anglo-Hispanic cultural relations

Nineteenth-century Spanish artistic responses to Spain's Islamic past are a lamentably neglected area, as is nineteenth-century Spanish art in general. The attention given to foreign perspectives, such as Washington Irving's bestselling *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards* (1832),[1] and Owen Jones' *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (1842–1845),[2] has completely overshadowed the significance of what Spanish writers and artists thought about their heritage.[3] Yet, the Spanish viewpoint demands attention. While foreign visitors indulged in Romantic musings when looking at Spanish culture as a whole, admiring 'Moorish' remains at the Alhambra palace in Granada, the mosque/cathedral in Cordoba, or the Giralda in Seville, Spaniards had to reconcile their country's Islamic past with Spain's identity as a Christian and Catholic nation. The Islamic past prompted serious questions: were the Muslims just oriental invaders who had occupied parts of Spain for nearly 800 years and then left without much impact? Or, did they shape Spain's culture and contribute to her development as a nation? Were the medieval Muslims foreign, or were they Spanish? The gaze of the Spaniard was thus directed inwards, towards a collective self in the past. At the same time, Spanish artists were aware of the external gaze of the foreigner who regarded all Spaniards, whether in the past or present, as 'orientals'. Spanish artists are thus located on both sides of Orientalism: their culture is at once orientalized by foreigners but they are also capable of orientalizing parts of their own culture

[1] First published as *The Alhambra; a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and the Spaniards* (London: Colburn & Bentley, 1832; Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1832). Irving's revised edition was published as *Tales of the Alhambra* (New York: Putnam, 1851).

[2] *Plans, elevations, sections, and details of the Alhambra: from drawings taken on the spot in 1834: by the late M. Jules Goury and in 1834 and 1837 by Owen Jones, Archt. With a complete translation of the Arabic inscriptions, and an historical notice of the Kings of Granada, from the conquest of that city by the Arabs to the expulsion of the Moors, by Mr. Pasqual de Gayangos,* 2 vols. (London: published by Owen Jones, 1842, 1845).

[3] The bibliography on perceptions of Spain is extensive. Examples are: E. Boone, *Vistas de España. American Views of Art and Life in Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); D. Howarth, *The Invention of Spain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); D. Howarth (ed.), *The Discovery of Spain. British Artists and Collectors: Goya to Picasso* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2009); K. Ferry, 'Owen Jones and the Alhambra Court', in *Revisiting Al-Andalus. Perspectives on the Material Culture of Iberia and Beyond*, ed. by G. D. Anderson and M. Rosser-Owen (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 225-244; C. Heide, 'The Alhambra in Britain. Between Foreignization and Domestication', *Art in Translation,* 2.2, (2010), 201-221. Monographs such as S. Koppelkamm, *Der imaginäre Orient* (Berlin: Ernst, Wilhelm & Sohn, 1987) include sections on the Alhambra.

and other cultures, a dynamic that, as Susan Martin-Marquéz put it, 'resembles a Möbius strip' and is hard to escape.[4]

This unique situation makes for complex dynamics of representation, which are particularly interesting in the light of ongoing theoretical debates on Orientalism. Nearly four decades on from Edward Said's narrow concept of Orientalism as an essentially Western discourse of power over the Islamic world, scholars like John MacKenzie, Reina Lewis, Mary Roberts, Victoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff and others have shown in various contexts that aesthetic responses to the 'exotic' do not form a homogenous discourse motivated by politics of subordination, but that cross-cultural connections or issues related to aesthetics, gender, class, or national identity destabilize any notion of a consistent discourse.[5] Following Deleuze and Guattari, the anthropologist José A. González Alcantud even speaks of a 'rhizomatic' model of Orientalism that lacks any specific origin or genesis, chronology and organization.[6] It is in this context of debate that the study of Spanish artists can make an important contribution.

Looking beyond the orthodox label of Orientalism, why and how did Spanish artists translate Spain's Islamic past into two-dimensional images? The focus in this article is on Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, Spain's leading Romantic landscape painter, who was fully established in official circles in Madrid and whose patrons included the Spanish queen Isabel II, but who also had connections to foreign elements. Indeed, Pérez Villaamil was influenced by British art, successfully catered to the tastes of a foreign clientele and attracted praise by

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[4] S. Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 9.

[5] J. Mackenzie, *Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); R. Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1996); V. Schmidt-Linsenhoff, *Ästhetik der Differenz* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2010); Z. Inankur, R. Lewis, and M. Roberts (eds.), *Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism. The Poetics and Politics of Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007) are representative examples. On non-European Orientalism, see Z. Çelik, 'Speaking back to Orientalist discourse' and R. Benjamin, 'Colonial tutelage to nationalist affirmation: Mammeri and Racim, painters of the Maghreb', in J. Beaulieu and M. Roberts (eds.), *Orientalism's Interlocutors* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), pp.19–41 and 43–77, respectively.

[6] J. A. González Alcantud, *El orientalismo del sur* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2006), p. 18.

high-profile critics such as Baudelaire. Existing scholarship on Pérez Villaamil has focused on his assimilation of British art and his status as one of Spain's first 'Orientalist' painters in relation to the wider European phenomenon of Orientalism.[7] This essay seeks to widen the perspective by considering the Spanish context and Spanish *attitudes* to the Islamic past at a time when interest in the exotic was burgeoning throughout Europe.

Context: Spanish representations of Islamic Spain before Pérez Villaamil

Representing aspects of Islamic Spain was by no means a new subject in Spanish art, and Pérez Villaamil would have been familiar with traditional Spanish iconographies based on the ideology of Christian Reconquest, confirming Christian moral and military superiority over the medieval Muslims. A recurrent theme in painting since the early modern period was the mythic Santiago Matamoros (Saint James 'Moor slayer') aiding Christians fighting the Moors in the legendary battle of Clavijo in the ninth century. This kind of imagery was complemented by printed images of Muslims as torturers and oppressors of Christians, and gargoyles on churches projecting a grotesque and fearsome image of Muslims.[8] A more rational approach began to emerge in the eighteenth century, partly as a result of peace treatises between the Spanish monarchy and Islamic nations, and partly out of a desire to participate within the European Enlightenment and highlight Spain's contribution to European development, including architecture. In 1787 and 1804, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando published two volumes of prints, *Las Antigüedades Árabes de España*, which were based on architectural drawings of the Alhambra in Granada by José Hermosilla, Juan de Villanueva y Juan Pedro Arnal. These volumes represent the first serious

[7] E. Arias Anglés, *El paisajista romántico Jenaro Pérez Villaamil* (Madrid: CSIC, 1986), and 'Pérez Villaamil y los inicios del orientalismo en la pintura española', *Archivo Español de Arte*, 71.281 (1998), 1–15.
[8] E. Martín Corrales, *La imagen del magrebí en España. Una perspectiva histórica siglos XVI-XX* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2002), pp. 45–47.

investigation of the Alhambra and provided a direct model for later studies.[9] That attitudes to the Spanish Moors remained ambiguous, however, is reflected in Goya's print series *Tauromaquia* (1815), which included several images of medieval Muslims fighting bulls. On the one hand, as Schulze has pointed out, Goya accorded Muslims 'a central role in the development of a quintessentially Spanish pastime',[10] but on the other hand, the bullfight itself was criticized as unworthy by most thinkers of the Spanish Enlightenment. In other words, the association of the medieval Muslims with bullfight was not necessarily a positive one.

It was not art but historical scholarship that seriously unsettled the perception of Spain's medieval Muslims as essentially other, notably through the landmark publication by the Spanish Arabist scholar José Antonio Conde: *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España* (3 vols, 1820–1821).[11] This was the first attempt at writing a complete history of Islamic Spain based on selected primary sources in Arabic, translated by Conde into Spanish. As Conde explained, these sources refuted the negative image of the Muslims that had been promoted by Christian sources. Building on Conde's work, the Arabist Pascual de Gayangos repeatedly reiterated the importance of the Iberian Muslims in Spain's history. Trained by Silvestre de Sacy in Paris, he first taught Arabic at Madrid's newly founded literary society, the Ateneo (1837), and actively lobbied for the establishment of a university chair in Madrid. While living in London between 1837 and 1844, he annotated and translated a major historical source text from Arabic (the Al-Makkari manuscript), which resulted in *The History of Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain* (1841–1843).[12] This publication, which was

[9] A. Almagro Gorbea (ed.), *El Legado del Al-Andalus. Las Antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Real Academia* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, 2015).
[10] A. Schulz, 'Moors and the Bullfight: History and National Identity in Goya's "Tauromaquia" ', *The Art Bulletin*, 90.2 (2008), 195–217.
[11] Published in 3 volumes (Madrid: Imprenta que fue de García, 1820-21).
[12] *History of Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain: extracted from the Nafhu-t-tíb min ghosni-l-Andalusi-r-Rattib wa Tárikh Lisánu-d-Dín Ibni-l-khattíb / by Ahmed Ibn Mohammed Al-Makkarí; translated from the copies in the Library of the British Museum and illustrated with critical notes on the History, Geography and Antiquities of Spain by Pascual de Gayangos,* 2 vols (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1840-43)

financed by the Oriental Translation Fund in London, was immediately recognized as a major work, and Gayangos was appointed the first chair of Arabic at the University in Madrid in 1843.[13] Such advances in scholarship coupled with the advent of Romanticism, with its thirst for the exotic and rejection of the classical tradition, opened up new avenues for a more positive appreciation of Hispano-Islamic Spain that transcended the traditional opposition of Christians and Muslims.

Scholarly efforts to reinstate the importance of the Muslims in Spain were echoed in Spain and abroad by literary scholars and creative writers who turned to the history of Al Andalus as a theme for novels, plays and poems. Many of them referenced Conde's work in their footnotes.[14] In Spain, the subject of the historical Moors — expelled from Spain in the early seventeenth century by the Habsburgs — particularly resonated with liberal and patriotic intellectuals suffering exile during the absolutist regime of Ferdinand VII. As recent research suggests,[15] their literary works did not portray Muslims as any more 'other' than medieval Christians, and are representative of reflection amongst Spanish elite circles on a new national and literary history in which the Muslims were accorded a vital and positive place.[16]

Does Pérez Villaamil's artistic output reflect similar concerns? After all, Pérez Villaamil too was a patriot, spent time in exile and then became an important member of Spanish elite circles. In 1823, aged 16, he joined Spanish liberal troops to defend the

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[13] C. Álvarez-Millán, 'The life of Pascual de Gayangos', in C. Álvarez-Millán and C. Heide (eds.), *Pascual de Gayangos. A Nineteenth-Century Spanish Arabist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 8–10. Also, M. Brett, 'Introduction to the new edition of Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain' in P. de Gayangos, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain by Pascual de Gayangos [1840–43]*, new edition: London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2002).

[14] For details, see my previous essay on which this article builds: C. Heide, 'The Power of Translation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain', *Art in Translation*, 4.1 (2012), 61–72.

[15] A. Ginger, 'Oriental Obsessions at the Time of Gayangos', in C. Álvarez-Millán and C. Heide (eds.), *Pascual de Gayangos*, especially pp. 49–58; also J. Labanyi, 'Love, Politics and the Making of the Modern European Subject: Spanish Romanticism and the Arab World', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 5.3 (2004), 229–42.

[16] See also A. Ginger, *Painting and the Turn to Cultural Modernity in Spain: The Time of Eugenio Lucas (1850–1870)* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2008), p. 284.

constitutional government against French troops arriving in Spain to restore the absolutism of Ferdinand VII. As a result, he spent time in prison in Cadiz before training as a topographical artist and accepting a commission for a mural in Puerto Rico, where he lived for three years, only returning to Spain after Ferdinand VII's death and the end of the absolutist regime. Pérez Villaamil's own experience of exile and his contacts with liberal figures, such as Martinez de la Rosa, would have conditioned a positive attitude towards Muslim Spain that was not necessarily founded on the principle of alterity. At the same time, external factors have to be taken into account: Villamil's return to Spain in 1833 coincided with the arrival of important foreign artists who set about visualizing Spain, its people, landscapes, and monuments, in drawings, paintings, and prints,[17] producing a manicured vision of Spain as Europe's 'oriental' other. Pérez Villaamil's own double position as a Spanish and an international artist, an insider and outsider, is perhaps best expressed in his three volumes of *España Artística y Monumental* (1842, 1844–1850), partly produced during Pérez Villaamil's sojourn in France (1840–1843). They included texts in Spanish and French for both a Spanish and foreign audience. An artist addressing multiple audiences, Pérez Villaamil was necessarily dealing in cultural translation. What then were the motivations, codes, and values by which Pérez Villaamil translated Spain's Islamic past into two-dimensional images and how might they have been understood at the time?

Rivalling the British tradition of landscape

In the absence of an established Spanish tradition of landscape painting, there is no doubt that the British school of landscape painting from William Turner to David Roberts was of great interest to an emerging Spanish landscapist like Pérez Villaamil. Diplomatic correspondence

[17] D. Howarth (ed.), *The Discovery of Spain. British Artists and Collectors: Goya to Picasso* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2009).

reveals his eagerness to meet Roberts, who was touring Spain in 1832–1833. In a letter to Julian Williams, the British vice-consul in Seville, William Brackenbury, the British consul in Cadiz, promoted Pérez Villaamil as a 'Spanish Gentleman of talent and acquirement who I have known for some years and for whom I feel much esteem and in whose welfare I have taken and do take an interest',[18] and also alerted Williams to Pérez Villaamil's wish to meet Roberts. Williams had a central role in the cultural life of Seville where he received foreign visitors, such as Delacroix, J. Frederick Lewis, Richard Ford and David Roberts, as well as local artists.[19] His house was a hub where Pérez Villaamil could have witnessed the foreign excitement about the 'cosas de España' and sense the commercial potential of Spanish views on the art market. Williams's letters to Roberts confirm that Roberts and Pérez Villaamil did meet in 1833,[20] and that Roberts' approach immediately became an important reference for Pérez Villaamil and other Spanish artists.[21] Pérez Villaamil and Roberts might have travelled together to Alcalá de Guadaíra, near Seville, where they both sketched views of the twelfth-century Almohad castle and its surroundings. Pérez Villaamil's painting *Ruinas del Castillo de Alcalá de Guadaíra* was exhibited in 1836 at the Real Academia de San Fernando;[22] a drawing entitled *Molino árabe: llamado de la Cartuja en Alcalá de Guadaíra* appeared as a

[18] Howarth, *The Invention of Spain,* p. 193. A. Giménez Cruz, *La España Pintoresca de David Roberts* (Malaga: Universidad de Malaga, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2002), p. 284ff. On Williams, see N. Glendinning, 'Nineteenth-century envoys in Spain and the taste for Spanish art in England', *The Burlington Magazine*, 131 (1989), 117-126.
[19] Three letters by Williams to David Roberts, National Library of Scotland (NLS hereafter), MS Acc. 11760. On 7 January 1835, Williams mentions that Pérez Villaamil had exhibited 'a copy of your interior of the Cathedral' in Madrid.
[20] Williams to Roberts, 14 April 1834. NLS, MS Acc. 11760.
[21] Williams to Roberts, 14 April 1834. NLS, MS Acc. 11760.
[22] Arias Anglés, *El paisajista romántico*, p. 212.

lithograph in the magazine *Liceo Artístico y Literario de Madrid* in 1838,[23] and the subject appeared again in later prints and paintings.[24]

Occasionally, as various commentators have pointed out, Pérez Villaamil even copied Roberts's compositions. In 1835, Williams told Roberts that Pérez Villaamil had exhibited a painting of the interior of Seville cathedral which was based on Roberts's version but had 'passed as an original [by Pérez Villaamil] and seems to have called the attention very much'.[25] While Pérez Villaamil's strategy of copying horrified Williams, it helped Pérez Villaamil to make a professional breakthrough as a major painter of landscapes and monuments in Madrid. Pérez Villaamil's absorption of Roberts's manipulative approach to landscape and architecture for effects of the picturesque and the sublime, along with lessons learned from studying works by Turner, John Martin and J. F. Lewis, was a way to make a name for himself as the representative artist of Spanish landscape painting on the national and international art scene. Pérez Villaamil was eventually appointed the first chair of Landscape at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (1844) in Madrid.

While Pérez Villaamil was closely attuned to British landscape painting, this did not prevent him from producing original work, such as the recently discovered diptych, which Pérez Villaamil sold to George Villiers, British ambassador in Madrid prior to Villiers's return to London in 1839.[26] Conceptually, Pérez Villaamil adopts the format reserved for religious art in order to offer an original mode of viewing Spanish sites. Unique in its arrangement, it represents a mosaic of 42 postcard views of Spanish sites, embedded in a

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[23] A. Pérez Sánchez, 'José Musso Valiente en el Liceo Artístico y Literario', in M. Martínez Arnaldos, J. L. Molina Martínez y S. Campoy García (eds.), *José Musso Valiente y su época (1785–1838). La transición del Neoclasicmo al Romanticismo*, 2 vols (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 263-272, see p. 267.

[24] For example, the version sold to Manuel de Guerrico in Paris in 1845 (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires); see A. M. Fernández García, *Catálogo de pintura española en Buenos Aires* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1997), p. 142, no. 469.

[25] Williams to Roberts, Seville 7 January 1835. NLS, MS Acc. 11760.

[26] J. Barón, *Genaro Pérez Villaamil. Díptico con vistas de ciudades españolas* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2014), p. 12.

painted background of Gothic-style architecture and set in a Gothic-style wooden frame (see Figure 1). Executed in a diluted manner, they mimic the technique of water-colour that is so common in British landscape art and would have appealed to British taste. In addition, the object-like quality of the diptych and its Gothic style must have satisfied Villiers' interests in Spanish furniture as well as the Gothic that was fashionable at the time.

But what kind of Spain is depicted? Focusing on the north (mostly Toledo, right panel) and the south (mostly Andalucia, left panel), Pérez Villaamil envisions a predominantly Gothic Spain, although Renaissance buildings and Hispanic-Islamic elements also feature, especially in the south: the Almohad Torre del Oro in Seville , the castle and mills at Alcalá de Guadaíra, a chapel in the mosque of Cordoba (Figure 2), the Casa de Pilatos, the Alcázar of Seville, and various churches featuring *mudéjar* elements.[27] As Javier Barón suggests, Pérez Villaamil's views are fairly accurate and occasional omissions of details might be due to the small size of the images. Yet, Barón also registers manipulations that are worth exploring further for their semantic significance. For instance, in the view of the *Puerta de Palos* of Seville Cathedral, the artist omits the pilaster adjacent to the door in order to reveal the foundations of the belfry, thereby acknowledging the Almohad origins of the structure. In the depiction of the entrance of a chapel in the sixteenth-century *Casa de Pilatos,* Pérez Villaamil transforms the semi-round arch into a more oriental-looking horseshoe arch, clearly suggesting its debts to Islamic architecture. He also orientalizes an interior view of the Alcázar of Seville, where the enlarged corbels accentuate the *mudéjar* character of the arches, while the Arabic inscription above the door in the background is carefully rendered. Similarly, Pérez Villaamil accentuates the *sebka* decoration on the belfries of the Sevillian Churches of the Omnium Sanctorum and of San Marcos, thereby stressing

[27] No. of views: Toledo: 23 (right panel), Seville: 15, Córdoba: 1, Sanlúcar de Barrameda: 1, El Puerto de Santa María: 1; Oviedo: 1 (left panel).

their Almohad origins.[28] Pérez Villaamil thus emphasises the 'oriental' character of Spanish architecture.

Other examples gothicize Hispano-Islamic buildings: in the interior view of the mosque of Cordoba (Figure 2), the height of the vaults is exaggerated so that the space resembles a lofty interior of a Gothic church, an impression that is only countered by the 'mihrab' visible in the background. Such an approach was no coincidence. Following Roberts and other artists of the time, Pérez Villaamil is tapping here into the aesthetics of the sublime, as well as the eighteenth-century theory that the Gothic developed from Sarracenic architecture.[29] The Spanish Enlightenment writer Jovellanos, for instance, advocated that 'German or Gothic architecture is the legitimate daughter of Arabic [architecture]',[30] an idea still popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in Spain and abroad. From the Spanish point of view, it was particularly attractive as it assured Spain a key position in the development of European architecture.

Overall, the diptych confirms Pérez Villaamil's absorption of British aesthetics to please his British client, while also suggesting a desire to embed Spain's Islamic heritage in a domineering Christian architecture. The stylistic equivalences between Pérez Villaamil and Roberts, however, mask significant differences in attitudes to their subject. For a better understanding of this Gothic framing, we need to turn to Pérez Villaamil's volumes of prints, *España Artística y Monumental,*[31] which were published in Paris by Arnold Hauser with funding provided by the Spanish banker and collector Gaspar de Remisa.[32] These volumes

[28] Barón, *Genaro Pérez Villaamil*, p. 28.
[29] See the important article by T. Raquejo, 'Arab Cathedrals', *The Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986), 555–63. Also, M. Mateo Sevilla, 'Medievalism and Social Reform at the Academy of San Fernando in Spain (1760–1808)', *Studies in Medievalism*, 9 (1997), 123–47; M. Mateo Sevilla, 'The Making of the Sarracenic Style: the Crusades and Medieval Architecture in the British Imagination of the 18th and 19th centuries, in: *The Crusades: other experiences, alternate perspectives*, ed. by K. I. Semaan (Binghamton, N.Y: Global Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 115–40.
[30] Quoted in Martin-Márquez, *Disorientations,* p. 27.
[31] Arias Anglés, *El paisajista romántico*, p. 535, Doc. No. 284.
[32] On Remisa, see O. Vázquez, *Inventing the Art Collection. Patrons, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Spain* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 94 and 204.

are crucial for understanding attitudes to Spain's heritage since meaning is generated by the juxtaposition of images and text. The texts are (mostly) by the Spanish liberal writer Patricio de la Escosura, who was, like Pérez Villaamil, a founding member of the Liceo artístico y literario in Madrid.

Islamic Architecture and Spanish identity

Pérez Villaamil's volumes, based on drawings from 1837 onwards,[33] followed in the footsteps of *The Tourist in Spain and Morocco* (London: Robert Jennings & Co, 1838, with prints by David Roberts and text by Thomas Roscoe) and several other foreign publications, such as Girault de Prangey's *Monuments arabes et moresques de Courdoue, Séville et Grenade* (3 vols, Paris: Veith & Hauser, 1836–1839). In Spain, Pérez Villaamil's publication competed with other subscription albums, notably the ambitious series of *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España,* which was initiated by the Catalan artist Francisco Javier Parcerisa in 1839 and resulted in multiple volumes dedicated to different regions (Barcelona: Imprenta Joaquín Verdaguer, 1839–1872).[34] The publication of *España Artística y Monumental* more or less coincided with the first three volumes of *Recuerdos y Bellezas* (Catalunya, 1839–1841; Mallorca, 1842–1844; Aragon, 1844–1848). Smaller in size, and cheaper than Pérez Villaamil's volumes, they were motivated by the desire to make known 'the artistic and natural beauties' of Spain.[35] Other rival albums include Francisco van Halen's *España pintoresca y artística* (Madrid, 1841)[36], and Amador de los Ríos's *Sevilla Pintoresca* (Seville: F. Alvarez & Ca., 1844) and *Toledo Pintoresca* (Madrid: Boix, 1845).

[33] Vázquez, *Inventing the Art Collection*, p. 296.
[34] See J. M. Ariño Colás, *Recuerdos y Bellezas. Ideología y Estética* (Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico', 2007).
[35] Piferrer in *Recuerdos y Bellezas. Catalunya* (1837), p. 7, quoted in Ariño Colás, *Recuerdos y Bellezas,* p. 30.
[36] Van Halen's work was announced in the *Gaceta de Madrid* on 4 October 1844. See Vázquez, *Inventing the Art Collection*, p. 236, note 21.

Within this competition, the *España Artística y Monumental* carves out its own niche. Escosura's introduction emphasizes that the aim was not merely to celebrate the 'glorias del arte en España' but to do history a service by providing Spaniards and foreigners alike with 'seguros medios' for the appreciation of Spain's civilisation.[37] He stresses that the knowledge of architecture is essential for anyone who wishes to understand the 'character' of a nation.[38] From the outset then, the images and texts in the *España Artística y Monumental* aim to educate the viewer/reader in terms of Spain's national identity.

What did Pérez Villaamil select and omit for self-representation? Unlike the *Recuerdos y Bellezas*, which includes natural landscapes and monuments from all periods, the *España Artística y Monumental* focuses on architecture during the period between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, which is referred to as the *restauración* of the Spanish monarchy. Geographically, it prioritises Castile, especially Toledo (44 views) and Burgos (19 views), but also includes views of monuments in other cities of Castile, Aragon, Andalusia, the Basque Country, Navarre and Galicia, and a small number of costumbrista scenes.[39] Escosura justifies this northern bias, firstly, by pointing out that:

> la Andalucía, mirada fuera de España como una especie de region encantada, y por otra parte de fácil acceso por su proximidad al mar, es la porcion de la Peninsula que mas han explotado los viageros. Granada, Sevilla, y Córdoba son ciudades del dominio de la poesía y de la novella; bien ó mal todo el mundo las ha visto descritas; no hay en fin novedad en hablar de ellas.[40]

[37] P. Escosura, *España Artística y Monumental* [hereafter: *EAM*], 3 vols (Paris: A. Hauser, 1842), vol. 1, p. 3.
[38] Escosura, p. 10.
[39] X. Salas, 'Varias notas sobre Jenaro Pérez Villaamil', *Archivo Español de Arte*, 31 (1958), p. 273-298.
[40] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. 1, p. 91.

In the same entry, he refers the reader to the 'excelentes obras' by Owen Jones and Girault de Prangey for information on the Alhambra, which is omitted in the *España Artística y Monumental.* Pérez Villaamil and Escosura thus promoted a shift in attention to what had been unjustifiably neglected and misrepresented: the north of Spain, Gothic Spain. Escosura points out that Castile was subject to the grave misconception that there was nothing but 'trigo y cebada, miserable chozas y remendadas capas'.[41] He proudly asserts that Pérez Villaamil's illustrations of the beauties of El Cid's patria 'victoriosamente' prove the opposite.[42] The third volume (1850) is almost exclusively focused on the north. As Pérez Villaamil and Escosura were both of Galician origins, personal pride in their native region must have been at stake, although this is never openly expressed in the texts.

Even though Islamic architecture is given less space than Christian monuments, its importance is acknowledged throughout. In various places, the text singles out the caliphate of Cordoba as an unprecedentedly sophisticated civilization on account of the progress made at the time in the 'ciencias, artes, suavidad de costumbres y hasta en nobleza de sentimentos',[43] which made Spain the point of origin for the diffusion of knowledge through the rest of Europe. This reinstatement of the importance of the Muslims in Spain resonates with earlier claims made by Spanish intellectuals since the eighteenth century, which referred to the achievements of Al-Andalus as a way to bolster Spain's contribution to European civilization.

Escosura's assimilation of Muslim achievements into Spain's history relies, however, on a careful rhetoric of domestication that distinguishes Iberian Muslims from the 'hot tempered' Muslims outside Spain. Escosura states that the Muslims who arrived in Spain changed thanks to the 'benéfica influencia del claro cielo de Andalucia', which moderated

[41] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. 1, p. 91.
[42] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. 1, p. 91.
[43] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. 1, p. 6.

their 'ardiente sangre'.[44] This idea relates to the distinction between fanatic Muslims of Africa and the superior Muslim civilization of Spain made earlier by Conde,[45] echoed in Romantic literary works of the 1830s,[46] and kept alive throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.[47] Escosura repeats it when commenting on Pérez Villaamil's view of the cavernous spaces of the *Molinos Árabes llamados de la mina* (see Figure 3). Escosura's text focuses less on the poetic effect and the picturesque inhabitants of the space than on the significance of these ancient mills in the past and present. He gives the Iberian Muslims credit for their exploitation of the natural caves through their knowledge of hydraulics. At the same time, he implies that this progress was only possible because the Iberian Muslims had transformed themselves:

> Al lanzarse desde sus desiertos al suelo feroz de la Península, animados por un sangriente fanatismo, comenzaron por sembrarla de luto y exterminio, muy en breve, casi prodigiosamente se convirtieron en un pueblo eminentemente civilizado. Lo cierto es que aun hoy los molinos de que se trata surten de pan á la metrópoli de Andalucía.[48]

Based on the concept of Hispanicized Muslims, Escosura rejects a negative 'oriental' identity for Spain's Muslims and stresses their importance to Spain's development.

In the same spirit, Escosura describes the Umayyad patron of the Cordoba mosque as a spiritual, powerful, and wealthy leader, a lover of the arts, a generous, proud, ambitious

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[44] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. I, p. 6
[45] T. J. Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 52.
[46] J. Labanyi, 'Love, Politics and the Making of the Modern European Subject', p. 236.
[47] P. Hertel, *Der erinnerte Halbmond. Islam und Nationalismus auf der iberischen Halbinsel im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenburg Verlag, 2012), p.79.
[48] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. 2, p. 81.

monarch, and a 'good Muslim' who made Cordoba the Mecca of the Occident.[49] Escosura's evocation of the Umayyads as Europe's most sophisticated culture of the Middle Ages is visually matched by Pérez Villaamil's interior view of the mosque of Cordoba included in the first volume of the *España Artística y Monumental*. It accentuates the rows of double-arches, receding into a deep, seemingly indefinite space that matches Burke's definition of the sublime. The small figures give a sense of the grandeur of the architectural interior while also reminding the viewer of the historical distance to the Moorish past. At the same time, the image's position in the volume — wedged between a plate of sixteenth-century military armour and the Gothic interior of the church of San Esteban in Burgos — ensures that Islamic Spain is embedded in a dominantly Christian context.

Throughout the *España Artistica y Monumental*, Umayyad Cordoba represents the main point of reference for the discussion of Hispano-Islamic architecture. For instance, a comment by Pérez Villaamil himself makes connections between Cordoba and his view entitled 'Ruinas árabes' near Humenejos (see Figure 4), a building no longer extant outside Madrid.[50] The decaying building, covered with foliage according to the Romantic poetics of ruins, features a pointed horseshoe entrance and lateral poly-lobed arches with alternately coloured segments that vaguely recall the arches in Pérez Villaamil's interior of the mosque of Cordoba. In his commentary, Pérez Villaamil (wrongly) speculates that the building was a former mosque transformed into a Christian church after the Christian conquest of Toledo under Alfonso VI, which gives him an excuse to reflect on Umayyad splendour of the palatial city Medinah Azahara (then only known through scholarship). Pérez Villaamil references the

[49] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. 1, p. 90
[50] *EAM,* vol. 2, plate no. 1. Cf with a drawing inscribed: 'Fragmento interesante antigua basilica mozárabe siglo IX. Corregido X. en un despoblado entre Parla y Torrejoncillo de la Calzada. Castilla la Nueva. Septiembre 17. 1840'. Arias Anglés, *El paisajista romántico*, p. 297; see also, J. A. Mateos Carretero, *Una historia en la historia de Parla: Umanexos* (Parla: Ayuntamento de Parla, 1991).

authors 'Murphy', 'Marsden' and 'Conde', which correspond to Murphy's *Arabian Antiquities* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1815), Marsden's *Numismata Orientalia* (London: Cox & Baylis, 1823), and Conde's *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España,* 3 vols (Madrid: Imprenta que fue de Garcia, 1820-1821). Such references are an example of the flow of ideas between different cultural spheres, from scholarship to the world of art and literature. While Pérez Villaamil's description of the building is testimony to the still rudimentary knowledge of Hispano-Islamic architecture at the time, it shows his desire to participate in the discovery of the Umayyad heritage of which Spain could be proud.

In subsequent commentaries by Escosura, too, the Umayyad period remains a major point of reference. Referring to Pérez Villaamil's interior view of the Salas de los Palacios de Galiana in Toledo, he affirms that it is a testimony of 'la adelantada civilizacion de los Arabes',[51] and, again referring to Cordoba, he remarks that the horseshoe arches recall the oldest part of the 'gran mezquita' of Cordoba. Similarly, he describes the Cristo de la Luz in Toledo as an example of the purest and correct style, referring back to Cordoba.[52]

Escosura's praise of the mosque at Cordoba is consistent with other Spanish voices of the time. For example, the authors involved in the *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España* identify the mosque as the most representative example of Muslim architecture in Spain, rather than the Alhambra in Granada or the Alcázares Reales in Seville, which are described as sensual and beautiful but criticized for lacking the purity, harmony and sense of unity of the mosque.[53] In Escosura's introductory account of the evolution of architecture, the Alhambra does not even feature.

[51] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. III, p. 48.
[52] Escosura, *EAM,* vol. II, p. 11.
[53] Ariño Colás, *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España. Ideología y Estética,* pp. 481–82.

How does Escosura explain the evolution of architectural forms? He goes so far as to say that Spanish architecture owed its originality to Muslim architecture since Christians adopted the 'manera arabiga'.[54] He recognizes that, during times of peace, Muslim architects from the south worked for Christians in the north, leaving an imprint in the architecture of the Christian monarchies. But it is the period that follows, from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, which most interests Escosura, for he identifies a reversal of roles, with Christians becoming the 'conquistadores' and Moors the 'conquistados'. He conceptualises this entire period as a Christian mission led by the church, the 'madre de los combatientes', who guided the Christian armies to victory against the Muslims. In his view, it was during this time that Christian art began to offer distinct characteristics, taking 'inciertos pasos á la perfeccion de los artes' that was reached under the reign of the Reyes Católicos.[55] In one instance, Escosura says that morally, the 'infidels' became Spaniards, and that architecture developed in both cultures, the Gothic and Arabic styles mix, fuse and amalgamate.[56] While Escosura implies hybridization, at least in terms of architecture, this process is not described in terms of an ethnic and social amalgamation. Muslims and Christians remain two different peoples.

For all its openness towards medieval Muslims and their achievements, Escosura's account does not lament Christian triumph, far from it. In fact, Pérez Villaamil's images of Christian buildings are frequently used as prompts to recall certain episodes of Christian triumph over Muslims. The monastery of Benevívere in 'Castilla la Vieja, centro y núcleo de la monarquía española' prompts Escosura to remind the reader of the Asturian mountains from where Pelayo 'revitalized' the monarchy, securing a first victory against the Muslims.[57] Commenting on Pérez Villaamil's view of the cathedral of Burgos, Escosura speaks of its Christian character and recalls its founder, San Fernando, as the liberator of Cordoba and

[54] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 6.
[55] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 7.
[56] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 9.
[57] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 18.

Seville from the 'infidels'.[58] Similarly, the view of the Palacio de los Duques del Infantado in Guadalajarra becomes an excuse to reference Álvar Fáñez de Minaya, 'sobrino, teniente é inseparable compañero del Cid', who rescued the region from the Muslims.[59] In the entry on the monastery of Santa María at Las Huelgas, Escosura discusses the architectural style in relation to Alfonso VIII, a 'cristiano' and 'impetuoso vencedor' at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, and Santiago, 'combatiendo á los Moros con la cruz al pecho y la lanza en ristre.[60] The world of architecture is thus seen through the lens of a Christian-centric history that leaves little doubt of the rightfulness of ultimate Christian triumph over Islam.

Escosura's reflections on the evolution of architectural form anticipate ideas that were more fully developed by Amador de los Ríos, who, in 1859, coined the term 'mudejar' to describe architecture built by Muslim craftsmen under Christian domination. Like Escosura, Amador identified hybridization of architectural style under Christian domination,[61] and located the birth of Spain's national character in the period of the 'Reconquista', a 'long, difficult and glorious period' from which the national character fully emerged.[62] Like Escosura, Amador de los Ríos considers the 'Reconquista' as a foundational period for Spain's identity, in which Islamic art became 'mudejar', passing from Muslims to Christians.[63] As Urquizar Herrera suggested, this Christianising account of architecture was a useful strategy for accepting and integrating an Islamic aesthetic legacy in Spanish architecture, without diminishing or renouncing a Christian identity for Spain as a nation.

Orientalizing and de-orientalizing tendencies

[58] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 30.
[59] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 38.
[60] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, pp. 26–27.
[61] A. Urquizar Herrera, 'La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar en España durante el siglo XIX', *Espacio, Tiempo, y Forma,* Serie VII, 22-23 (2009–2010), 201-216.
[62] Amador de los Ríos, cited by Urquízar Herrera, 'La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar', p. 204 note 8.
[63] Cited by Urquízar Herrera, 'La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar', p. 213.

While the *España Artística y Monumental* refrains from exoticizing Iberian Muslims, it illustrates the special place of the Spaniard writer/artist on both sides of Orientalism: it projects otherness onto marginal types in Spanish society (bandits, gypsies) and Muslims from outside Spain, whilst countering foreign orientalizing views of Spanish people. For example, in a text-book definition of orientalist cliché, Escosura paints a colourful picture of Andalusian bandits as he signals their dislike of physical work, indulgent behaviour, poverty, moral weakness, and brutality.[64] They fight 'como el Arabe del desierto, raza con la que conservan los serranos mas de un punto de analogía', and have excellent riding skills and a sense of honour for they attack the rich not the poor; they are hospitable, agile, and have a passion for the 'marvellous', while feeling a strong attachment to the horse like the nomadic Bedouin as well as being prone to superstitious beliefs.[65] He pens a still worse description of Andalusian gypsies, whom he identifies in the figures depicted in Pérez Villaamil's *Ruinas del Castillo de Alcalá de Guadaira* (see Figure 5). Escosura asserts that these 'gypsies and vagabonds' are of uncertain origin and not Spanish. Their 'tribe' is 'ratera por instinto […] astuta como la zorra, perezosa y sucia como otro animal que es más decente callar, pero graciosa […] tenaz en sus ideas, contenta con su miseria, opuesta a toda reforma, resignada y hasta orgullosa con su envilecimiento'.[66] He adds that foreigners have the wrong ideas about the Spanish gypsies, just as they are usually wrong about things concerning Spain.[67] In another instance, he remarks with irony that Andalusia — Spain's most popular destination — was also the least well known region because of the deplorable 'ignorancia de unos, y la mala fé de otros en cuanto a las cosas de nuestra patria'.[68] Escosura's complaints about foreign perspectives of Spain echo those by other key figures, such as Blanco White, or

[64] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, pp. 49–50.
[65] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. I, p. 51.
[66] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. II, p. 11.
[67] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. II, p. 11.
[68] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. II, p. 48.

Mesonero Romanos, author of *Escenas y tipos matritenses* (Madrid: Imprenta y litografíade Gaspar Roig, 1851), who argued that the best way to fight against clichéd views was to simply present the truth about Spanish people.[69]

Many entries in the *España Artística y Monumental* can be seen as part of a general desire to provide a corrective to foreign orientalist perceptions of Spanish religious customs. For example, the entry relating to Pérez Villaamil's interior view of the chapel of San Isidro (in the church of San Andrés), Madrid, pre-empts any potential misreading of the figures kneeling on the ground as 'oriental'. Escosura explains that this custom of kneeling on the floor in no particular seating order is a manifestation of an essential quality of the common Spanish people: a certain innate love for personal independence, which 'se opone siempre á la esclavitud y no pocas veces al órden'. In his view, the Spanish people have always been free in Spain.[70]

Pérez Villaamil's convent interiors show figures of nuns either quietly conversing, or kneeling in prayer. In his view of the cloister of Las Huelgas, two male visitors, one of them with a chair under his arms, perhaps the artist himself, approach two nuns. Escosura comments that Pérez Villaamil had gained access to the cloister thanks to the abbess of Las Huelgas, and perhaps this is what Pérez Villaamil alludes to in this image. Escosura's respectful description of the scene contrasts with the 'oriental' implications of David Roberts's depictions of convent interiors (Figures 6 and 7). As David Howarth has noted, Roberts' views of church interiors or convents encourage the viewer to explore the erotic and oriental potential of the image. In one instance, nuns are depicted in a cross-legged pose, which is explained in the accompanying text as a remainder of Moorish customs, while the

[69] Mesonero Romanos, quoted in Ariño Colás, *Recuerdos y Bellezas de España, Ideología y estética*, p. 303.
[70] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. 1, p. 33.

young novice sister is called 'the lovely object' with a 'bewitching sweetness in her smile that was irrestible'.[71] The much more sober comments on religious ritual in the *Espana Artística y Monumental* serve as a corrective to such foreign orientalist visions and as a positive affirmation of Catholicism as a quintessential trait of Spanish identity.

The world of landscape and architecture as a national fantasy

Pérez Villaamil's search for historical references and national identity in the world of landscape and architecture is evident in the paintings completed following his appointment in 1845 as Director of Landscape at the Real Academia de San Fernando de Bellas Artes in Madrid, and shortly afterwards as court painter to Isabel II.[72] In 1848 the queen commissioned six paintings from him, three of which relate to Spain's Hispano-Islamic past: *El juramento de Álvar Fañez de Minaya*, *Los picos de Europa y Argolivios en la serranía de Covadonga en Asturias, Sevilla en tiempos de los Árabes.* Subsequently, the queen purchased three more paintings from Pérez Villaamil: *Procesión en Covadonga*, *El Pórtico de la Gloria de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela, Interior de la catedral de Toledo, en el acto de cantarse la misa.* Commenting on these three latter paintings, the historian José Díez already remarked that they exceeded the decorative purpose of landscape given their associations with the history of the monarchy.[73] The ideological weight of the chosen subjects is even more apparent when considering the first commissions as well.

Pérez Villaamil's paintings of Covadonga can hardly be described as 'Orientalist', as 'orientals' are visually absent. However, Pérez Villaamil's references to Covadonga propel the viewer back to the legendary victory of Pelayo over the Berbers in 722 at Covadonga, only eleven years after Muslims had set foot on Iberian soil. This first victory was firmly

[71] Howarth, *The Invention of Spain*, p. 194.
[72] E. Arias Anglés, 'Colecciones del Patrimonio Nacional', *Reales Sitios*, Año X, núm. 36 (1973), 106–45.
[73] J. L. Díez García, *La pintura isabelina. Arte y política* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2010), p. 71ff.

anchored in the collective psyche. The site of Covadonga, with its holy cave serving as a mausoleum for Pelayo and his descendants, became a place of regional devotion in the seventeenth century.[74] Medieval chronicles and Golden Age literature turned Pelayo into a hero as the originator of the Spanish monarchy and as a patriot. In the eighteenth century the Bourbon Charles III actively promoted Covadonga as a sacred place of national significance, and even commissioned a statue of Pelayo and the building of a grand classical temple to replace the earlier collegiate church, which had been destroyed by fire, although the project was left unfinished in 1792. As pointed out by Boyd, the Bourbons exploited the myth of Covadonga at a time of national restoration: 'Just as Pelayo had saved Spain from the Moors, so the Bourbons had rescued Spain from its helpless collapse' under the Habsburgs.[75] Neo-classical writers transformed Pelayo into an anti-tyrannical figure, a symbol for independence in the period prior to Peninsular War. As indicated above, Escosura, in the *España Artistica y Monumental,* returned to Pelayo's image as the king who had 'revitalized the monarchy'.[76]

Early topographical prints of Covadonga date from the eighteenth century, including the widely distributed 'religious topography' by Antonio Miranda Cuervo and Antonio Gil (1759, Figure 8). In the sky, Pelayo offers his cross of victory to the Virgin, angels carry wood for the building of the chapel of the holy cave below, and a small number of pilgrims advance towards the sanctuary, helped by ecclesiastics pointing the way. This allegorical, peaceful, neatly laid out landscape featuring small trees, figures, and a winding path to the sanctuary is transformed by Pérez Villaamil into a pantheistic view of nature in *Procesión en Covadonga* (Figure 9), a sublime landscape that rises, falls and curves, and is filled with

[74] Z. García Villada, *Covadonga en la tradición y en la leyenda* (Madrid: Administración de Razón y Fé, 1922), pp. 75–76
[75] C. Boyd, 'The Second Battle of Covadonga: The Politics of Commemoration in Modern Spain', *History and Memory,* 14.1-2 (2002), 37-64, especially p. 41
[76] Escosura, *EAM*, vol. 1, p. 18.

pilgrims.[77] Effects of grandeur are enhanced by the manipulation of the sanctuary in the background: the architectural base is taller than in reality, the abutment below is exaggerated as is the scale of the mountainous slope.[78] The painting is partly based on real experience, as Pérez Villaamil attended a 'festividad de Covadonga' in September 1850 during one of his trips to Asturias.[79] Details of costume and ritual are carefully rendered: in the centre, a procession is led by ecclesiastics carrying the image of the Virgin of Covadonga and a cross, while other pilgrims on the steep slopes observe the spectacle from above. One man is playing an Asturian bagpipe, and several women with coloured parasols sitting on the ground provide picturesque detail, perhaps in an oblique nod to Goya's *La Pradera de San Isidro* (1788) in Isabel II's collection. Yet Goya's social gathering of pilgrims on the banks of the river Manzanares seems light-hearted in comparison to Pérez Villaamil's dramatic depiction of pilgrims fully immersed in their physical and spiritual journey to honour the origins of Spain.

The painting's autograph inscription 'Commemoration of the battle of Covadonga and the origin of the Spanish monarchy' leaves no doubt as to the religious and historical significance that is projected onto the site of pilgrimage. It invites reflection on the ancestry of the Spanish monarchy, its Christian triumph over the Muslims, and the faith that unites all Spanish people. This link between monarchy and religion had particular currency in 1851 when Pérez Villaamil was putting his final touches to the painting in Madrid. The 'Concordato', a treatise between the state and the Catholic Church, signed in 1851 by Isabel II, Juan Murillo Bravo (the president of the 'moderado' party), and the Pope, re-affirmed

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[77] Cf. with others versions, e.g. the one in the Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias, which shows the sanctuary with pilgrims moving towards it, and *Landscape with orientals* (1851), which depicts turbaned figures against the background of the Peaks of Europe.

[78] J. Barón, 'Covadonga en la pintura: del Romanticismo a la Guerra Civil', *Covadonga: Iconografía de una devoción: exposición conmemorativa del centenario de la dedicación de la basílica de Covadonga 1901-2001,* (Oviedo: Servicio Central de Publicaciones del Principado de Asturias, 2001), pp. 109-23. Also see the catalogue entry on p. 267.

[79] Arias Anglés, *El paisajista romántico,* pp. 127, 146 and 150.

Spain as a unified Catholic nation and restored much of the ideological power that the Church had lost during the liberal revolution of the mid-1830s. Covadonga subsequently became the focus of renewed royal interest: Isabel visited Covadonga in 1858, later king Alfonso XII added 'Pelayo' to his name, royal gifts were made to the Virgin of Covadonga, and in 1872 the restoration of the sanctuary began.[80]

While Pérez Villaamil's Covadonga paintings are evocative of the Iberian Muslims and their defeat without depicting them, his other paintings visually acknowledge their presence in Spain. *Sevilla en tiempos de los árabes* (1848, Figure 10) compositionally relates to Roberts's painted view across the river Guadalquivir to the Torre del Oro (Prado), a view that was repeated by many nineteenth-century artists in paintings, prints, and photographs. However, unlike Roberts, who includes contemporary figures, Pérez Villaamil depicts turbaned figures seated in the foreground and a more primitive view of the city and the Torre del Oro (without the later Christian addition on the top). This is Seville pre-Reconquista. The viewer is thus invited to imagine how Seville once was under Muslim rule.

El juramento de Álvar Fáñez (Figure 11) shows a crowd of both Christians and Muslims in a grand palace, which opens to the left, vaguely recalling the Alhambra's Hall of Justice, as engraved by David Roberts for *The Tourist in Spain: Granada* by Thomas Roscoe (London: Jennings and Co, 1835). The palace is conceived as a lofty space, with slender and elongated columns, tall and wide arches, and sublime in its spatial grandeur, dazzling colour and surface patterns. The vast space is almost cathedral-like, which, as noted above, evokes the theory that Islamic architecture was at the origin of Gothic architecture, therefore, putting emphasis on what Christians and Moors might have in common, rather than the ways in which they differ. Any form of essentialism of the Muslims is also complicated by the fact that Álvar Fáñez, the twelfth-century vassal of Alfonso VI, is seen surrounded by a multitude

[80] L. López García-Jove, *La Batalla de Covadonga e historia del santuario* (Oviedo: Lux, 8th ed., 1960), p. 151.

of Muslims and Christians, and there is a sense of the friendly relations and chivalry, which is mentioned by Escosura in the *España Artistica y Monumental* as an element that binds Christians and Muslims. According to the painting's inscription, Álvar Fáñez is taking an oath after the 'defeat of Cuenca'. This relates to the time when the Almoravid tribes from North Africa had entered Spain, and Álvar Fáñez defended the region surrounding Toledo, where the Muslims were still loyal to king Alfonso VI. Following his initial defeat of Cuenca, Álvar Fáñez eventually succeeded in defeating the Almoravids.

It is interesting to see that Pérez Villaamil incorporates elements of North African architecture — a minaret rising against the sky — thereby pointing to the wider Islamic world to which the Almoravids belonged. Bearing in mind the distinction, made by Escosura and others, between the 'superior' Muslims of medieval Spain and the fanatical, intolerant Muslims of North Africa and the Middle East, a similar contrast might be implied here. What is clear is that Pérez Villaamil's painting is more than a mere orientalist fantasy. Through visual allusions to peaceful Christian-Muslim co-existence and threats from the Almoravids from North Africa, the painting stands as a history painting par excellence, encapsulating the process of transition from Muslim to Christian rule during the years of the Reconquista.

The idea of a successfully completed Reconquista, militarily and spiritually, is confirmed by Pérez Villaamil's *Pórtico de la Gloria de la catedral de Santiago de Compostela* and the *Interior de la catedral de Toledo*, both of which are emblematic of Spain's medieval history. The cathedral dedicated to Santiago, patron saint of Spain, recalls his mythic intervention in the battle against Muslims at Clavijo. In turn, Toledo cathedral is closely associated with Spain's medieval kings who advanced the Reconquista from the north.

The historical dimensions and originality of Pérez Villaamil's landscapes and architectural views become clear when seen in the context of other major public projects of

the time. For instance, the proposals by Federico de Madrazo and Carlos Luis de Ribera for the decoration of the new building of the Congreso de los Diputados included painted representations of iconic figures of the Reconquest (Pelayo, Santiago, the Cid, San Fernando).[81] Similarly, the prize-winning works of the National Exhibition of Fine Art in 1856 (*Don Pelayo* by Luis de Madrazo and *El suspiro del moro* by Benito Soriano Murillo) alluded to the origin and end of the reconquest. These works, which flanked the throne from which Isabel II and her husband presided over the award ceremony, belong to a category of official propaganda that aligned Isabel II with Isabel the Catholic, emblematic figure of the reconquest and a unified Christian Spain.[82] Pérez Villaamil's paintings are not conceived in such obvious propagandist terms, and solicit instead meditation on Spain's Christian-Islamic history.

As a final consideration, I would like to draw attention to Pérez Villaamil's *Las gargantas de las Alpujarras* (1848) (Figure 12). Just as Pérez Villaamil's *Los picos de Europa y Argolivios en la serranía de Covadonga* recalls the site of the first Muslim defeat, this landscape points to the region where the rebellious Moriscos were quelled by the troops of Philip II in the late sixteenth century. Pérez Villaamil pictures nineteenth-century travellers quietly moving on a path below the ruins of a castle, high up on a rocky mountain, while two figures in the foreground contemplate the grandeur of this empty and hostile landscape. The sky, marked by rays of light, suggests the end of one era and the beginning of a new one (in a way that recalls once more the influence of British art, especially Roberts and John Martin). For a Spanish viewer, such a melancholic visualization of the absence of the Muslim people — who once lived in the Alpujarras — might have easily recalled the story of the Morisco leader Aben Humeya, a central figure of the play *Aben Humeya* by Martínez de la Rosa

[81] Díez García, *La pintura isabelina*, pp. 47–57.
[82] Díez García, *La pintura isabelina*, p. 87.

(1830). As Andrew Ginger has pointed out, this author described the Muslims as a 'nation' in the midst of a Christian nation, and drew attention to the enforced Christianisation that was the basis of Spain as a nation.[83] This was one of several literary works of the 1830s that triggered empathy for the fate of the Muslims and, instead of otherness, recognized the positive potential of the Muslims in Spain's history. Pérez Villaamil's landscape is of course not an illustration of Martínez de la Rosa's work, but could easily accommodate such empathetic views of the Moriscos.

Returning to the questions asked at the beginning as to the motivations, codes and values by which Spanish artists translated aspects of Spain's Islamic past into two-dimensional images, it is clear that the orthodox model of Orientalism based on alterity is not helpful in providing answers. On the one hand, Pérez Villaamil's views of the remains of Moorish Spain were a way to match and rival the British school of painting and thereby create a name for himself and Spanish painting. On the other hand, the strategies used in the *España Artística y Monumental* reveal a desire to correct the foreign orientalising gaze. The Christianising account of Hispanic-Islamic architecture that is constructed in the *España Artística y Monumantal* was a means by which an Islamic legacy could be accepted and integrated into Spain's historical identity, but without renouncing a Catholic identity for Spain as a nation. Pérez Villaamil's paintings for Isabel II are evocative of the presence of the Muslims in Spain, a mingling between Christians and Muslims, as well as defeat of the Muslims. However, an obvious triumphalist rhetoric is avoided.

In 1853, when Pérez Villaamil donated *Las Gargantas de las Alpujarras* to a charitable organization, the historian Evaristo San Miguel gave an address on Spain's history at the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, in which he emphasized the achievements of the Iberian Muslims and stated that the popular conservative conception of them as barbaric and

[83] Ginger, 'Oriental Obsessions at the Time of Gayangos', p. 52.

warlike could no longer be upheld.[84] In this way the positive contribution of Muslim Spain was publicly expressed in the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, which fifteen years earlier had refused to support the work of Gayangos. Pérez Villaamil's landscapes and architectural views have to be seen in the context of this same period, in which Spain's Islamic past presented an opportunity for Spanish artists and writers to debate, reflect on, re-imagine and assert their own historical identity and values.

Las representaciones de Al-Andalus en la cultura visual de España del siglo XIX constituyen un campo de estudio muy fértil para reflexionar sobre el Orientalismo. Centrándose en el paisajista Jenaro Pérez Villaamil, este ensayo desvela la situación particular de los artistas españoles como objeto y sujeto del Orientalismo: su cultura sufre una clara orientalización por los extranjeros, pero al mismo tiempo los artistas españoles también son capaces de orientalizar partes de su propia cultura y otras culturas. El discurso académico sobre Pérez Villaamil se ha centrado en su asimilación del arte británico y su posición como uno de los primeros pintores 'orientalistas' en España. Amplificando esta perspectiva, el ensayo destaca temas ideológicos y las *actitudes españolas* frente al mundo Islámico. Mirando más allá de la etiqueta del Orientalismo, ¿cuales son las motivaciones, códigos y valores que influyen a Pérez Villaamil en sus representaciones del pasado Islámico y cómo fueron entendidas? Su *España Artística y Monumental* (libro de grabados que nunca ha sido estudiado en profundidad) y sus paisajes y vistas arquitectónicas realizadas para Isabel II se analizan como meditaciones sobre el pasado islámico, no necesariamente basadas en el concepto de alteridad.

[84] Cited in T. Monroe, *Islam and the Arabs in Spanish Scholarship*, p. 65.

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Notes on contributor

Dr Claudia Hopkins is Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Edinburgh. She co-edited, with C. Álvarez, a collection of essays *Pascual de Gayangos: a Nineteenth-Century Spanish Arabist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) and contributed to the exhibition catalogue *The Discovery of Spain: British Artists and Collectors: Goya to Picasso*, ed. D. Howarth (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 2009). She has published essays on (cultural) translation and is currently working towards a monograph on Spanish Orientalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is also researching Spanish art criticism as part of a collaborative project on the reception of US art in postwar European art criticism in the Cold War era.

Correspondence to: Dr Claudia Hopkins, History of Art, University of Edinburgh, 74

Lauriston Place, Edinburgh EH3 9DF, UK. Email: c.hopkins@ed.ac.uk